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Book B85

BRIEF SKETCH

OF THE

CHARACTERS AND SUFFERINGS

OF THE

PILGRIMS,

WHO SETTLED AT PLYMOUTH, DEC. 1620.

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THE PILGRIMS.

THE settlement at Plymouth, in Dec. 1620, by a company of Englishmen, a civilized and christian people, not only displayed the most resolute and disinterested qualities in the characters of the individuals who effected it ; but has produced the most extensive and salutary benefits to the present generation, and the great family of man. They were zealous advocates for religious and civil liberty. For their adherance to those unalienable rights, they suffered every thing which human nature could endure ; and for the furtherance of their holy purpose, they left their native land, and planted themselves in a solitary and unexplored wilderness. They were not a set of adventurers, seeking sordid gain—they were not political levellers, opposed to social order, or the legitimate authority of government. Nor were they ignorant fanatics, boasting of needless mortification, or hostile to human learning. They had studied the great subject of religious freedom, and were ready to endure all things, and to lose all things else, to secure, and to extend this great blessing. Their history is well known. They were first persecuted in their own country, they were

pilgrims and sojourners for ten or twelve years in a strange land. They dared the dangers of the ocean, and of the wilderness to make way for their children and their posterity to enjoy unmolested the right of thinking for themselves, and of worshiping God solely according to his own most holy word.

The place to which they came, at the beginning of a long inclement season, was much less pleasant and fertile than the banks of the Hudson, for which they intended. But the treachery of man followed them on the ocean—and they were obliged to make their residence on a bleak and boisterous coast, in an exposed harbour, and where no friendly help was nigh to protect and comfort them.

But trusting in God, this little band of pious heroes was sustained; they increased and prospered. Among them were many characters of great experience, prudence and virtue. Some of them were men of good education, and the most were far above the common class of Europeans of that period. They knew the necessity of order in society; they early enacted laws to encourage and reward industry and temperance; they established schools for the education of youth—and above all, they were most solicitous to maintain the gospel ministry, and to provide for the religious instruction and improvement of the great body of the people by a learned and pious Clergy.

The good effects of these institutions and principles have been felt through every succeeding generation—

and to them indeed, must we refer for the general intelligence, virtue and republican sentiments which have since pervaded our happy country.

Mr. CARVER was their first Governor—he was a man of great prudence and sound judgment; and enjoyed the confidence and affection of the company in an eminent degree. Before they left Holland, on several occasions, he had been their agent to Britain, and proved himself an able and faithful advocate of their cause. He died in May following their settlement.

Gov. BRADFORD who succeeded Carver, was of a good family in the North of England—he had a knowledge of the ancient, learned languages, and was well acquainted with general history, and the polemic divinity of that day. He is also said to have been a very discreet, judicious, firm and prudent Magistrate. He was Governor from 1621 to 1657, the time of his death, excepting four years, when he declined the office; two of which PRINCE, and two, WINSLOW was Governor. His descendants are very numerous, and are spread over most parts of the United States.

WILLIAM BREWSTER, whom they called “the Elder,” was educated at the University in England; and had sustained several important public offices under the British government. He is said to have been very learned, especially on theological subjects and in philology. But his great praise was, piety to God, and a corresponding desire to promote the cause of genuine religion. He was the old-

est of the company, being nearly 60 when they first settled at Plymouth. When they were without an ordained minister, he regularly and ably performed religious service—and his instructions were blessed to the spiritual good of many. He died in 1644, aged 83 years, greatly lamented and respected. For several generations, his descendants remained in Plymouth Colony—afterwards, some of them moved to Lebanon and Preston, in Connecticut. Since the days of the apostles, perhaps there has not been an individual more pious, more disinterested, or more esteemed. He was worthy to be the disciple and colleague of the celebrated *Robinson*.

EDWARD WINSLOW was one of the most respectable and influential of the company of the Pilgrims, as well on account of his intelligence and virtue, as for his property, which was greater than any of the first settlers. HOPKINS and ALLERTON were next, in point of property.—Gov. Winslow's family connexions in England were very respectable—he had been well educated, and was possessed of abilities sufficient not only to govern this infant Colony of puritans, but to assist in managing the concerns of a great people or nation. He was twice elected Governor, and had he survived Mr. Bradford, no doubt would have been chosen first Magistrate for many years. In 1648 or 9, he went to England as agent for the Colony—entered into the service of the Commonwealth under Cromwell, who sent him a Commission with the fleet to Jamaica, where he died in 1654. His descendants of every generation have been heroes and statesmen.

MILES STANDISH, one of this worthy band, was a military character, a man of great enterprize and bravery.—He had been a soldier in Flanders. Under Providence, he was their shield and their defence. The hostile savages bled beneath his sword, and the European adventurer was subdued by his mighty prowess. He was son of a younger brother of a noble family—and on the death of the elder, without issue, he was rightful heir to a great estate—but he never inherited it. There are but few of his descendants, who bear his name now, in N. England.

Gov. PRINCE was a man of great influence from the first settlement of the place, and his character much respected. His whole life was devoted to the service of the plantation—In the lifetime of Mr. Bradford, he was twice chosen Governor ; and after his death in 1657, he was elected many years, and was Chief Magistrate of the Colony when he died in 1673.

John Alden, Samuel Fuller, John Howland, William White, Stephen Hopkins, and Richard Warren, were also among those who assisted in building up the settlement at Plymouth, and were the advisers of the Governor, or the companions of Standish in regulating and defending the plantation. J. Alden was an assistant from 1638 to 1636, the time of his death, when he was 88 years old. S. Fuller was a deacon of the Church, and an eminent Physician. The descendants of Warren have been men of influence and respectability in the County of Plymouth : and some of those of S. Hopkins have held important public offices in the State of R. Island.

The names of those who signed the civil compact, in Cape-Cod Harbour, Nov. 1620, were as follows, viz. :—

PILGRIMS.

John Carver,
William Bradford,
Edward Winslow,
William Brewster,
Isaac Allerton,
Miles Standish,
John Alden,
John Turner,
Francis Eaton,
James Chilton,
John Craxton,
John Billington,
Joses Fletcher,
John Goodman,
Samuel Fuller,
Christopher Martin,
William Mullins,
William White,
Richard Warren,
John Howland,
Stephen Hopkins,

Digory Priest,
Thomas Williams,
Gilbert Winslow,
Peter Brown,
Edmund Margesson,
George Soule,
Richard Bitteridge,
Edward Tilly,
John Tilly,
Francis Cooke,
Thomas Rogers,
Thomas Tinker,
John Ringdale,
Edward Fuller,
Richard Clark,
Richard Gardiner,
John Allerton,
Thomas English,
Edward Doten,
Edward Leister.

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